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ABSTRACT

This paper urges primary grade teachers to be certain that pupils are off to a good start in reading. A fundamental goal of beginning reading instruction should be to move each child toward the understanding that readers reconstruct texts by using multiple strategies to interpret the language encoded in print and, at the same time, to make it possible for the child to do this by providing information that will enable construction of appropriate strategies. It considers the ways a teacher can stimulate young children to read, such as using experience charts in class; using the Guided Listening Thinking activity to choose a library (picture) book to read; or using the shared book (Big Book) experience. According to the paper, phonics should not be taught for its own sake but rather to assist learners to unlock unknown words. The paper suggests word banks for young readers and storybook time every day when the teacher reads orally to the pupils. The paper also recommends sustained silent reading as offering a positive model for reading. It cautions that the primary grade reading teacher needs to have all pupils experience initial successes with continual optimal progress emphasized for each child. (Contains 11 references.) (NKA)

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Reading in the Primary Grades

by Marlow Ediger

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M. Ediger

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READING IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

Primary grade teachers need to be certain that pupils are off to a good start in reading. These early years of instruction are crucial in guiding pupils to have a positive altitude. Pupils should learn to enjoy and realize that many benefits accrue from the act of reading. The teacher needs to communicate to pupils that he/she loves to read and communicates these feelings to learners. An attitude of reading is a good endeavor which needs to be communicated to pupils. Not only should it be enjoyable to pupils but also useful in its many manifestations. There are numerous things that a teacher can do to stimulate young children in becoming lovers of library books.

Strommen and Mates (1997) conducted research into young children's ideas about the nature of reading and wrote the following:

Our observations confirm that learning to read is a developmental process but show that a young child's age, word and letter- level decoding skills, are not necessarily reliable indicators of what he/she understands reading to be, and, therefore, of what intervention may be useful.

It is important for teachers to realize that a child's growth in ideas about what readers do and his/her growth in reading itself are interdependent. A fundamental goal of beginning reading instruction should be to move each child toward the understanding that readers reconstruct texts by using multiple strategies to interpret the language encoded in print, and at the same time, to make it possible for the child to do this by providing information that will enable construction of appropriate strategies. With this in mind we make the following recommendations regarding children early literacy instruction.

1. Teachers of young children should initially stress a child's ideas about the nature of reading, written language, and the written code, as well as his/her reading strategies, and tailor reading experiences to the child's ideas about what readers do.

2. Teaches should ask themselves what new information could

cause a child to rethink or interpret what he or she believes and challenge each child's nonconventional ideas through demonstrations that contradict his/her current thinking. For example, frequent rereadings of a particular text help to build a child's knowledge of written language, but may also promote the idea that reading is memorizing texts. If a child believes this is what readers do, then demonstrating that readers can and do read a variety of unfamiliar texts may contribute to a shift in the child's thinking.

3. Teachers should set expectations for a child's reading performance that always takes into account the child's ideas about how readers read.

Developing a Love for Reading and Word Analysis Skills

The act of reading means that pupils are reading enjoyable and useful materials. Reading does not mean a study of phonics, nor lessons on syllabication. Rather, reading involves securing ideas, content, and subject matter. Thus, reading stresses a form of holism in that concepts and generalizations are obtained from print materials. An immersed reader finds few distractions and is actively engaged in what is being read. The interest factor in reading propels pupils to reach toward higher levels in reading subject matter. Thus, the pupil and the content to be read become one, not separate entities.

With active involvement in reading, the pupil should attach meaning to ongoing concepts and generalizations. Meaning is attached to what is being read. The abstract print then makes sense to the reader. Understanding of print materials assists pupils to like reading in its diverse purposes. Pupils learn to predict what comes sequentially in ongoing reading tasks. This helps the pupil to overcome difficulties in recognizing individual words when predicting in a contextual situation. Further reading will provide the pupil with clues as to the predictions being correct or incorrect. Holism is involved in reading ideas, not fragmented sounds or syllables. Learners need to feel they have control

over what is being read. In other words, they are able to understand in a meaningful way that which is being read. Pupils have control over their own reading when they can break the code involving abstract symbols. Does this mean that phonics needs to be taught in beginning reading? Good teachers have always brought in phonics instruction when stressing a holistic reading curriculum. The phonics is brought in contextually, not within isolated word analysis lessons.

Pupils need to develop a basic sight vocabulary of relevant words as they progress through the early primary grades. The sight vocabulary for reading needs to be developed within a viable context, not within isolated words presented by the teacher. A more meaningful procedure is then in evidence when contextually pupils achieve a vocabulary for reading whereby words are recognized at sight. In addition to a basic sight vocabulary, pupils need to attain basic learnings in phonics. Phonics has its many values when a pupil cannot determine an unknown word, but can identify this word through analysis, such as in phonics. Thus the pupil associates individual sounds with their related symbols. It does not take long before pupils can apply relevant phonics principles when unlocking unknown words in a contextual situation. Interest in reading should never be destroyed through the development of a basic sight vocabulary of words whereby these are known by immediate observation. Nor should phonics instruction destroy interest in reading. There are an endless number of games in which pupils truly enjoy learning phonics within a contextual situation as the need arises. I have supervised many student teachers and cooperating teachers who have devised games to assist pupils to enjoy mastering new words which then are recognized at once through observation.

As the young child progresses in reading, he/she develops concepts pertaining to what a word is when seeing it in print. Usually, pupils individually also learn the letters within a word and the related sounds inherent in the word. There are words which contain letters that have a one to one correspondence with the related sounds. Other sounds need two letters such as the "th" sound in words such as "the,"

"this," and "that." Pupils need to do much reading with teacher guidance as well as by themselves so that increased skills in word recognition occur. The teacher also needs to read aloud to pupils so that the latter obtain concepts pertaining to content , sequence of ideas presented, punctuation, stress, pitch, and structure of sentence patterns. Selections read aloud by the teacher should be interesting, understandable, and purposeful. These reading selections might well serve as a basis for pupils liking or disliking reading instruction.

The Experience Chart

Experience charts are an excellent way for pupils to enjoy reading as well as extend their skills in this area. Here, the classroom of pupils or a smaller group has had an interesting experience such as looking outside the classroom window to notice rain falling. After an ample period of time for observing the rain fall, pupils provide ideas to the teacher in developing an experience chart. Learners should understand the content presented to the teacher, since a concrete situation was provided for pupil thought. The teacher records subject matter on the chalkboard, presented by pupils. As the ideas are given, pupils can see talk written down. A word processor may also be used to record pupil's ideas for the experience chart.

Once the ideas have been presented, the teacher guides pupils in reading the recorded ideas from the experience chart. Pupils read the content orally with the teacher as he/she points to each word or phrase. Here, pupils have opportunities to develop a basic sight vocabulary of words for reading. The contents of the experience chart may be read over again as pupils desire. With rereading, pupils are aided in identifying more and more sight words. Pupils notice talk is written down. These can be considered as writing experiences for young pupils. Thus, there are individual letters, words, phrases, and sentences. Whatever is said by pupils can be recorded on the chalkboard or by using the word processor. Learners usually begin to make statement such as the following pertaining to the recorded contents in the experience chart:

1. Here are two words that begin or end with the same letter.
2. These two words rhyme.
3. These are long words or these are short in length.
4. These are the same letters in the two words but they make different sounds.
5. This word has taller letters as compared to that word.

It is quite obvious that pupils do make discoveries and may develop interest in this activity at the same time. I have personally observed much enthusiasm when pupils engage in making discoveries by examining words and sentences.

In making comparisons among different experience charts, it is quite obvious that more sophistication is shown on the learner's part when sequential experiences are provided. Edige: (1988) lists the following assumptions involving experience charts:

1. Pupils are actively involved in experiences which provide content for an experience chart.
2. Learners present ideas for the experience chart.
3. Pupils with teacher help read content pertaining to their very own experiences.
4. Learners may notice how ideas are written down using abstract letters and words.
5. The content in the experience chart is familiar to learners since it relates to their own personal lives.
6. The experience chart method may assist pupils to develop interest in reading.
7. Individualization is inherent in using experience charts since each child has unique experiences. Each child may then present content for a group or individual experience chart.

Pupils soon select library books to read and practice reading those same words experienced on experience charts. Pupils should experience diverse activities so that learning to read is pleasurable and progress is made sequentially. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) wrote the following

objectives for guided reading which serve well in all reading programs:

* It gives children the opportunity to develop as individual readers while participating in a socially supported activity.
* It gives teachers the opportunity to observe individuals as they process new texts.
* It gives individual readers the opportunity to develop strategies so that they can read increasingly difficult texts independently.
* It gives children enjoyable, successful experiences in reading for meaning.
* It develops the abilities needed for independent reading.
* It helps children learn how to introduce texts to themselves.

Young children need to achieve these broad objectives in reading sequentially. Success in each sequential step is important. Interesting and purposeful reading materials need to be in the offing. The reading teacher needs to know each pupil well so that a quality reading curriculum may be continuous and ongoing.

Guided Listening Thinking Activity

The Guided Listening Thinking Activity (GLTA) emphasizes the teacher choosing a library book which children would love to read. Pupils predict what the book might be about as the title and illustrations are viewed. Pupils with teacher guidance then read a short selection in which the height of action in the story is involved. Pupils then need to evaluate their original prediction or hypothesis. Each hypothesis must be respected and further hypothesizing is encouraged for the rest of the story. Then pupils with teacher assistance may read aloud to find out what did happen in the picture book. Higher levels of cognition need to be emphasized in the early primary grade levels. They are necessary in every day life with its many perplexities and difficulties. Pupils should be encouraged to do critical and creative thinking as well as problem solving as early as possible.

After the picture book has been read, pupils may raise additional

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questions about the contents. It is salient to obtain pupil reaction to the contents. With reflection, pupils should be able to provide reasons for answers given. Learners should ask many questions covering what was read from the picture book.

The GLTA is teacher directed in that he/she chooses the book to be read. The teacher encourages questions to be raised by pupils. He/she stimulates pupils to make predictions, develop hypotheses, and think at higher levels of cognition. The teacher establishes the classroom climate for the activity, and provides support for each pupil. It is child centered in that pupils are encouraged to identify problems, make predictions and hypothesize. Pupils have opportunities to raise questions continuously when reading the selection from the picture book.The pupil needs to be as actively involved as possible in responding to questions and problems. Listening carefully and well is an important goal to stress in GLTA.

The Shared Book Experience

The shared book experience emphasizes heavy pupil participation in the actual reading of content. The shared book experiences stress the use of a Big Book. With the Big Book, all pupils in the group can clearly see the illustrations and print from where they are seated. Examples of two Big Book are When the King Rides By (Mahy, 1986) and The Greedy Goat (Bolton, 1986).

Contents in Big Books should have predictable subject matter for pupils so that they can rather readily determine what will come next in story sequence. The teacher introduces the Big Book to pupils by looking together at the illustrations therein. These illustrations are discussed and provide pupils with background information in order to understand Big Book content more effectively. Pupils with background information will be better able to read along with the classroom teacher from the Big Book. Predictions may be made by pupils in terms of outcomes of the story. These predictions may be checked at an appropriate point when reading cooperatively. Pupils might then be

involved in critical and creative thinking as well as problem solving. These higher cognitive goals are to be encouraged and should be based upon the present developmental level of each pupil. Respect for the learner and his/her abilities is always important. Good citizenship and democracy need to be practiced continuously in the classroom.

When pupils read along together with the teacher from the Big Book, they learn to identify words which might present problems in recognition. In comparison, the experience chart approach made it so that pupils presented ideas for the chart; learners together with the teacher read the related contents. The Big Book philosophy of reading instruction also emphasizes pupils learning to recognize words contextually while reading together with the teacher. At the end of the reading experience, pupils as well as the teacher may ask questions such as the following to provide interest in phonics:

1. Which words did you notice that started with the same letter or sound?
2. Which words end with the same letter and sound?
3. Which vowel letters in words make the same sound?
4. Which vowel letter makes a different sound when comparing two or more words?
5. Do you see words whereby two letters make a single sound?

Each of the above learning activities needs to be emphasized or adjusted to the present achievement level of pupils. Pupils should enjoy phonics activities. These experiences need to be positive for pupils and assist in developing word recognition skills. Phonics should not be taught for its own sake, but rather to assist learners to unlock unknown words. Phonics then has practical and utilitarian values and is not taught for intrinsic values.When pupils and the teacher orally read together the contents from a Big Book, a type of choral reading is being emphasized. Learners may perceive sentence patterns which provide structure for the English language. Rereading of a Big Book, especially if desired by pupils, is to be encouraged. I think most of us had our favorite books as

children which we reread many times. In my case The Little Red Hen was read over and over again as a child! A major objective here is to guide pupils in wanting to read more literature and at a more complex level as optimal progress is being made by individual pupils. With rereading, comprehension appears to increase, meaning that more complex questions may be discussed with pupils. Familiarity with words is important when assisting pupils in developing a basic sight vocabulary. Choral reading and rereading assist pupils in achieving a core of functional words, necessary in becoming a good reader.

Word Banks and the Young Reader

One way to assist pupils to master words is to stress the word bank concept. With the word bank, each pupil prints on a three by five inch card a word that has been mastered in reading. With the addition of new cards, the pupil must alphabetize the set of words and rehearse the correct identification of each.The reward to the pupil is to see the stack of cards get larger due to having mastered more sight words. The teacher could place an interesting sticker on each card as reinforcement.

There are pupils who enjoy making sentences from words in the word bank. Pupils could work in teams doing this. The point is to have pupils read words within context frequently and thus become better readers. Peers may also work together by providing drill and practice experiences from the use of these word bank cards.

Word bank cards could also be grouped in terms of

1. those having the same beginning sounds.
2. those having the same ending sounds.
3. those having the same vowel sounds.
4. those having grave irregularities in spelling between symbol and sound.

As many uses as possible should be made of word bank cards. Games may be devised, sentences expanded, and stories written with the use of these cards.

Storybook Time with Children

The teacher needs to read orally to pupils each day. Why? Here, pupils learn about a story, about vocabulary terms, about sequential ideas in a story, about sentence patterns, about characterization, about the setting of a story, about the plot, about the theme and message presented by the author. Pupils also may learn to enjoy good literature for their developmental level. Perhaps, an individual child desires to read the same book during spare time or at home. Background information for the child's time to read has then come from the teacher's oral reading. There should be familiarity when the pupil reads the same book as compared to not having heard the contents read by the teacher. The teacher needs to become very familiar with children's literature so that pupils perceive a model to emulate. A few years ago while supervising a student teacher and cooperating teacher, I noticed how knowledgeable the latter was about library books for pupils. This teacher related library books with those being read to children. I believe young children were fascinated with the knowledge the teacher had about library books. Thus, a good characteristic of a teacher who reads orally to pupils is that he/she likes children's literature. The horizons of the primary grade teacher need to be expanded in knowing about recent books that have come out in children's literature as well as remaining informed about older books of high quality, the latter being important to Perennialists. Perennialism, as a philosophy of education, believes that the enduring ideas in time and space, such as classical literature, are important and not recently published books.

The primary grade teacher should also read enthusiastically to pupils. Learners are very attentive to these read aloud sessions if the teacher shows love and enjoyment of oral reading. As the oral reading progresses, the teacher needs to show related illustrations in the book to pupils. There should be adequate time for pupil to comment about the illustrations and content. If the comments from pupils seem endless, the

teacher may politely say that we have time for one more pupil. Otherwise, it is wholesome and good for children to react to what is contained in a library book.

The teacher needs to observe pupils when reading aloud to notice the pace at which learners can understand the content. I have observed teachers read too rapidly whereby pupils seemingly cannot understand the contents. The opposite has been true also in which the content was read too slowly by the teacher. Remember, pupils can listen to and comprehend content more rapidly as compared to the reading that they do. Thus, pupils read more slowly as compared to comprehending content listened to. With practice and feedback from pupils being read to, the teacher can adjust the speed of reading aloud to what pupils can process in terms of subject matter listened to.

Voice inflection which includes stress, pitch, and juncture is very important in oral reading to pupils. Certain words need to be stressed more than others so that proper interpretation is an end result. A monotone says all words with the same stress, but a dynamic speaker places more stress on specific words as compared to others so that meaning in interpretation is in evidence. Proper pitch is important also when reading aloud. Thus, selected words are pitched higher or lower than others. Why? Whatever is said involves interpretation by the speaker as well as by the listener. By pitching words properly, there are better chances for appropriate communication. It is much easier to secure the attention of others with proper pitch of words as compared to a monotonous voice. And by pitching words appropriately, the reader of library books emphasizes what he/she wishes to communicate. Proper pauses or juncture need to be in evidence in oral reading of children's literature. Juncture then indicates that the reader pauses where commas, periods, and other punctuation marks are located. By omitting or slighting punctuation marks, distortion in meaning of content read certainly can be an end result.

One day as I was supervising student teachers in a public school, a cooperating teacher mentioned to me that she felt our pre-student

teachers should have supervised practice in reading aloud to pupils. I was glad to receive the feedback. In our teacher education classes then, we did emphasize university students reading well orally to peers, according to quality criteria, and also that they received practice in the public schools in reading orally to pupils at different age and achievement levels. This is vital for a good teacher.

The teacher should have good eye contact with each pupil as the read aloud continues. This indicates that a teacher is communicating to all pupils and watches their attention span. Pupils do need to be attentive and engaged when the teacher reads aloud from sequential library books. Literature read to children needs to be carefully chosen by the teacher. Hopefully, the contents will be interesting and enjoyable to pupils whereby these learners will have an inward desire to achieve in reading skills and attitudes. The teacher needs to choose a variety of genres in literature so that the diverse interests of pupils is met. Teachers usually tend to become knowledgeable about which library books fascinate learners when being read aloud.

It is good teaching practice for a teacher to read the library book privately, which will be read aloud to pupils later. A definite strategy should be developed in introducing the library book. Here, readiness factors enter when assisting pupils to like the new book to be read aloud. Certainly, the teacher should discuss the illustrations at the beginning of the book with children, prior to reading, so that there is more familiarity with the content. By thinking of procedures to use when reading each library book, the teacher soon develops a repertoire of skills which assist in gaining the attention of pupils in desiring to read literature. I think it is good procedure, too, for a teacher to read aloud those library books he/she enjoys. After all, these positive attitudes should have their affects within listeners. A special time needs to be set aside each day for oral reading so that pupils realize the importance of this activity. When I attended grade school from 1934-1942, primary teachers always set aside time after the one hour noon recess for oral reading of children's literature to pupils. The read aloud had a tendency

to make for relaxed feelings and, I believe, provided readiness for studying in the next curriculum area.

Where should the teacher be when reading aloud to pupils? I have noticed teachers who read aloud to pupils, when supervising student teachers in the public school, such as

1. being seated in front of the classroom.
2. being seated in a chair while pupils are nearby seated on the carpet.
3. being seated on the floor on an even level with the pupils.
4. being seated in the middle of the classroom.
5. being in a standing position and moving around the classroom while reading aloud to pupils.

Individualized Reading

Once children have developed an adequate number of basic sight words for reading, they may become involved in individualized reading. Here, there needs to be an appropriate number of library books for pupils to select from in choosing a book to read. The titles need to indicate different genres to provide for the interest needs of individual pupils. Also, the library books must be written on diverse achievement levels so that each pupil may choose a book which harmonizes with his/her present achievement level in reading. Content which is too complex to read frustrates the reader. Subject matter that is too easy might well become boring to the reader. Thus, there are library books which are on the reading level, not frustration nor boring level, for pupils to select from for individualized reading.

These library books should be displayed at a learning center in an interesting manner to capture pupil attention. A bulletin board with neatly displayed book jackets of new library books should also assist pupils to develop interest in individualized reading. The teacher should tell a few interesting things about a library books as it is held up for learner viewing. Hopefully, this will also assist in whetting the appetites of pupils for individualized reading. The primary garde teacher needs to

think of different strategies in developing within pupils a desire to select and read sequential library books. The pupil is the chooser, not the teacher, as to which library book a pupil is to read. The teacher offers assistance if pupils are hesitant in choosing or if they do not find an appropriate library book to read.

The individual pupil then chooses a library book to read at the learning center. Usually, a learner will select a book that refers to a preferable genre and is on his/her reading level. Sometimes, a pupil needs to select a different library book to read due to the complexity of the original book selected. Once a pupil has settled down to read silently, the library book chosen, a good reader or teacher aide may assist pupils with word identification. Each pupil should be given adequate chances to determine an unknown word before assistance is given in word recognition. Primary age pupils need to become as independent in identifying words as possible. Sometimes, a few pupils become too dependent upon the teacher for word identification. Through the use of content clues and phonics, a pupil can identify many words which generally would be unknown to the reader (Ediger, 1997).

Following the completion of silent reading of a library book, the pupil should have a brief conference with the teacher. Here, the involved pupil reads a short selection to the teacher from the library book. The teacher may also choose the selection to be read orally by the pupil in the conference. The primary grade teacher may then observe errors made by the pupil in oral reading and assist in remedying the problems areas. Which problems do pupils reveal on oral reading on the primary grade levels? Student teachers and cooperating teachers whom I supervised have enumerated the following:

1. omitting words. This can be a major problem if meaning is distorted when reading the selection. sometimes when "a," "an," and "the" are omitted by learners in reading in the conference setting, the meaning may not change any.

2. adding words. When the young child adds words that are not in the reading selection, the resulting meaning may or may not change.

Pupils do add the article "the" with no change in meaning of the sentence. Other words added may really distort the meaning of what is read.

3. disregarding punctuation marks. If commas are omitted when words are in a series, the meaning will be greatly distorted. The same is true if a period is omitted and a run on sentence is an end result. Errors made by pupils provide a basis for determining objectives to stress in the reading curriculum.

4. hesitating too long before pronouncing words. Frequent hesitations, lasting each five seconds or longer, do hinder pupils in reading with understanding. Generally, a library book is too complex for reading if hesitating before word pronunciation hinders pupils in attaching meaning to what is being read.

5. Repeating what has been read correctly.

Teachers of individualized reading need to record the types of errors made by pupils in reading aloud in a conference setting after the latter has completed the reading of a library book. These reading errors should be examined and then noticed if remediation instruction is necessary. As was indicated, some types of errors may not be important enough to stress in remediation work. Thus inserting or omitting articles, among other kinds of errors, might be quite minimal in a holistic approach of reading instruction whereby learners may become skillful in predicting what will follow in sequence in reading.

In the conference within the individualized reading program, pupils and the teacher need to appraise comprehension of the learner. I would suggest that the teacher stress higher levels of cognition in individualized reading. Thus critical and creative thinking, and problem solving need adequate emphasis in the conference involving pupil and teacher. The teacher needs to have a good working knowledge of children's literature when an individualized reading program is in evidence.

I would suggest that the teacher read children's literature, keeping

a file on each book read as to its contents, as well as reading reviews of new library books for pupils to read. There are excellent reviews of children's literature in The Language Arts (See bibliography entry of the National Council Teachers of English) as well as in The Reading Teacher (See bibliography entry of the International Reading Association). The teacher should become very familiar with Caldecottt and Newbery Award winning library books. The Caldecottt Award is given to the author of the best illustrated library book written for children whereas the Newbery Award is given to the author, also annually, who wrote the best judged content. There are other awards given annually to the best writer of the year in children's literature such as in Missouri the Mark Twain Award is given for writing the best judged children's library book.

Every year, a Children's Literature Festival is held On the Truman State University Campus. I have served as a member of the Children's Literature Festival Committee for several years. Live authors speak to children and show their written works. At this Festival, children are divided into small groups of ten so that there are ample opportunities for pupils to ask questions of the authors. Children make some very positive informal comments about the festival during its sessions. Some of these comments which I heard in passing were the following:

1. I didn't know good authors were living individuals. I thought they had to have died sometime ago to be called an author.
2. I am thrilled to see and listen to an author.
3. one author even signed his signature to a library book I now have!
4. I like to ask questions of live authors that I could never have asked before.
5. I have written letters to authors but never listened to one talk to us.

In a questionnaire provide pupils directly after the Children's Literature Festival, the following were rated high with a 4 or 5 average

rating, as marked by pupils in the questionnaire:

1. the Festival was truly worth attending.
2. the pupils listened carefully to authors as they talked about writing their books.
3. I learned much about the children's books discussed.

The lowest rating was given to one author speaking in too quiet a manner when presenting his library book to children.

A Children's Literature Festival seemingly does much to interest pupils in the reading of library books. This observation was confirmed by teachers of pupils attending the Festival. Seemingly, pupils did more reading that previously. Motivation to read had increased. Many pupils read library books written by the authors who appeared at the Festival. Apparently, the authors had provided readiness or an introduction to reading the library books. It does help pupils in wanting to read a book if they have become familiar with it in one way or another. Modeling by authors at the Festival is a powerful factor in encouraging pupil reading of books.

I have observed to how Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) can offer to children a positive model for reading. In one school I visited, everyone in the elementary school building read during a certain time of the day, usually twenty minutes in length. When the word "everyone" is mentioned, this included the custodian and cafeteria workers. Pupils can then notice that people do read and there must be something enjoyable and valuable in doing so. One very important model for pupils in reading is the primary grade teacher. This teacher needs to be enthusiastic about reading and what has been read. I noticed a second grade teacher tell about Plato's The Republic she had read the previous summer in a university graduate class. She told pupils of how Plato had divided people into three class--- the rulers of the nation, the military personnel, and the artisans or workers. This teacher showed pictures of present day adults and asked pupils which of the three categories of Plato's Republic they would come under. Pupils were fascinated with the

discussion and were actively engaged in the activity. I do believe pupils will remember sessions such as these and consume more literature now as well as when they progress through the different levels of schooling.

Conclusion

Primary grade reading teachers need to provide a variety of concrete, semiconcrete, and abstract experiences for pupils so that a solid foundation is laid for successful reading. The instruction should be as holistic as possible so that pupils read content, not work on isolated sound/symbol relationships. The act of reading is holistic whereby learners need to perceive the whole of the selection read. This leaves room for the teaching of phonics as needed. Some children will need much less phonics as compared to others. How much phonics is to be taught depends upon the needs of individual pupils (Ediger, 1997).

To identify unknown words, contexts clues are important for pupils to use. Further help for pupils in unlocking unknown words is to use phonics. Teachers and pupils need to realize the upper limits of phonics use. There are letters which are rather consistent between symbol and sound. However, there are are many weaknesses or limits in phonics use, such as in the following words: phone, through, rough, flight, among others. Here, the relationships between individual sounds and symbols do not harmonize in most cases.

The primary grade reading teacher needs to have all pupils experience initial successes with continual optimal progress emphasized for each child. No child should be permitted to fall through the cracks to be a failure (Ediger, 1998). The following might then be emphasized in teaching and learning:

1. developing a love for reading and word attack skills.
2. using experience charts.
3. emphasizing Guided Learning Thinking Activities (GLTA).
4. stressing shared book experiences.
5. building word banks with young readers.
6. providing for story book time.

7. Implementing individualized reading (Ediger, 1998).

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